

Health Advisory:

Enhanced Disease
Surveillance
Presidential Debate
October 8-15, 2004
St. Louis Region

September 28, 2004

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/>.

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance that warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Advisory
September 28, 2004

FROM: RICHARD C. DUNN
DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: Enhanced Disease Surveillance From October 8-15, 2004,
Associated With The Presidential Debate in St. Louis, MO**

On October 8, 2004, a presidential debate is scheduled to take place on the campus of Washington University in St. Louis. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and local public health agencies in the St. Louis metropolitan region request that all health care providers be on the alert for possible terrorism-associated diseases resulting from exposure to biological or chemical agents, or radiological materials. Although providers should always be alert to the possible occurrence of terrorism-associated diseases, increased vigilance is especially requested during the period from October 8-15. As further described below, any suspicion of terrorism-associated disease, or any unusual manifestations or clusters of illnesses, should be immediately reported to DHSS at 800-392-0272 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

To date, there have been no specific, credible threats targeting the presidential debate in St. Louis; however, it is incumbent on us to recognize the increase in risk when this region is placed on the national and international stage. Therefore, the prudent course is to heighten our awareness of potential terrorist acts during the period surrounding this debate.

Persons Associated with Presidential Debate

For surveillance purposes, "persons associated with the presidential debate" is defined to include "any attendee of the debate including guests, media, security, first responders, volunteers, demonstrators, and employees or students of Washington University."

Enhanced Surveillance

During the period surrounding the debate, DHSS and local public health agencies are enhancing disease surveillance activities to better recognize covert, intentional biological, chemical or radiological attacks. Since the usual incubation period for some of the bioterrorism agents of greatest concern may extend to about a week (see <http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/BCR/G/Bio%20Card%203.pdf>), enhanced surveillance efforts will be in place from October 8-15. (NOTE: The usual incubation period for smallpox is longer, approximately 12-14 days. For more information on the clinical recognition and diagnosis of smallpox, see <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/diagnosis/#diagnosis>.)

Office of the Director
912 Wildwood
P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Telephone: (800) 392-0272
Fax: (573) 751-6041
Web site: www.dhss.state.mo.us

During this enhanced surveillance period for the presidential debate, immediate notification of public health authorities should be made for the following:

An individual associated with the debate (as defined above) who presents to an emergency department or primary care clinic with any of the following indications of an infectious or toxic illness: fever with or without rash; respiratory signs/symptoms; neurological signs/symptoms (including change in mental status or acute flaccid paralysis); diarrhea or vomiting; or sepsis. Providers are encouraged to ask all patients who present with these symptoms about possible association with the debate.

Regardless of whether the persons involved are associated with the debate or not, please report any of the following:

- Any suspect case(s) of illness due to a potential bioterrorism-related disease (including anthrax, botulism, brucellosis, glanders, plague, Q fever, smallpox, tularemia or viral hemorrhagic fevers) or a covert chemical or radiological release.
- Any unusual clusters or patterns of illnesses or deaths (e.g., ≥ 2 patients presenting with unexplained flu-like illness; pneumonia; adult respiratory distress syndrome; sepsis; or neurological, gastrointestinal or dermatological disease -- especially if occurring in otherwise healthy persons who share a common site or source of exposure).
- Any unexplained severe infectious or toxic illness or death in an otherwise healthy person.

Patients meeting the criteria above should be reported to DHSS's Department Situation Room (DSR) at 800-392-0272. The DSR is operational 24/7 and will be responsible for contacting the appropriate local public health agencies.

Public health staff at DHSS and the local public health agencies will be on stand-by during the period surrounding the debate to investigate any findings of concern. We appreciate your continued collaboration with our efforts to monitor illness in Missouri.

Educational resources regarding potential terrorism-associated diseases resulting from exposure to biological or chemical agents, or to radiological materials, are available at the DHSS Emergency Response and Terrorism web site (http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/BT_Response.html). Resources for specific threats are also available at the web sites listed below.

Bioterrorism

For information on agents and diseases:

Biological Threats: Information for Medical Professionals (DHSS)
http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/BT_Response/Bio_Med.htm

Bioterrorism Agents/Diseases (CDC)
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/agentlist.asp>

Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (University of Minnesota)
<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/>

Chemical Terrorism

For information on specific agents and their effects:

Chemical Threats: Information for Medical Professionals (DHSS)

http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/BT_Response/Chem_Med.htm

Chemical Agents (CDC)

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/agentlistchem.asp>

For detailed information on the medical management of specific chemical agent exposures:

Medical Management Guidelines (MMGs) for Acute Chemical Exposures (ATSDR)

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/mmg.html>

Radiological Terrorism

For information on radiation emergencies and the medical management of exposed persons:

Radiological/Nuclear Threats: Information for Medical Professionals (DHSS)

http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/BT_Response/Nuclear_Med.htm

Radiation Emergencies (CDC)

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/index.asp>

Guidance for Radiation Accident Management (REAC/TS)

<http://www.ornl.gov/reacts/guidesitemap.htm>

ATSDR – Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

DHSS – Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

REAC/TS – Radiation Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site